

**Draft Summary of the Environmental Work Group Meeting
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)
April 24, 2002**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted the Environmental Work Group meeting on April 24, 2002 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary of the discussion for information purposes to interested parties who could not attend the meeting. The following are attachments to this summary:

Attachment 1: Meeting Agenda
Attachment 2: Meeting Attendees
Attachment 3: Flip Chart notes
Attachment 4: Study Plan Review Package: SP-F2, SP-F8, SP-F10
Attachment 5: Approach for Cumulative Impact Analysis

Introduction

Attendees were welcomed to the Environmental Work Group meeting and objectives were discussed. The meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees with their affiliations are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. Notes recorded during the meeting on flip charts are included as Attachment 3.

Action Items – March 7, 2002 Environmental Work Group Meeting

A summary of the March 7, 2002 Environmental Work Group meeting is posted on the relicensing web site. The Facilitator reviewed the status of action items from that meeting as follows:

Action Item #E47 Status:	Develop a report and data management protocol DWR has developed a data management approach that was presented to the Plenary Group. The participants requested that the same presentation be given during the May Environmental Work Group meeting.
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Update on Plenary Group Actions

SP-W2

Steve Ford, DWR Resource Area Manager (RAM) for the Environmental Work Group gave a brief summary of the Plenary Group discussion on Study Plan W2. Two issues with this study plan were discussed and Steve reported that resolution has been achieved:

- 1) Timing of sediment sample analysis: Proposal is to defer sediment sample analysis until water quality and fish tissue sample data have been analyzed. At least six sediment samples would then be chosen and tested for contaminants. This proposal is agreeable to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and will be integrated into the study plan.
- 2) Additional sampling location: FWS requested the addition of a second sampling location within the Oroville Wildlife Area (OWA) due to the variability within the OWA. This request was agreeable to the Environmental Task Force and will be integrated into the study plan, increasing the sampling locations to 15. Steve indicated that DWR and NMFS continue to work on wording revisions for the introduction to SP-W2.

Study Plan Review

SP-F10

Study Plan SP-F10 was available to the Environmental Work Group and is included in Attachment 4 to this summary. Steve Ford reported that the Plenary Group had no heartburn issues with this study plan. Paul Bratovich with the consulting team summarized this study plan and the objectives for the Environmental Work Group. Comments from the Environmental Task Force have been incorporated into the version distributed to the participants.

One participant requested that they consider rewriting the first objective to reflect what is written within Task 1. After some discussion, the participants agreed not to change the wording. Paul explained that some of the activities within Task 1 are used as tools to meet the overall objective but are not themselves an objective. Another concern was if Task 1e reflected the actual fish situation on the Feather River. Eric Theiss, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), explained that information within Task 1e was written to give the reader the needed background information for this study. The participants agreed with the language as written. Mike Meinz with California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) pointed out a numbering error for the sub-tasks. Several minor edits were made.

Steve Ford explained that an additional 'global' change would be made in the section of the study plans that identify which issues are being addressed by the study plan. Discomfort over the use of the terms 'direct' and indirect' to describe whether an issue is included within the study plan has led to a proposal to change the terms or column headings to "Issues Fully Addressed" and Issues Partially Addressed'. This will be incorporated across all study plans before the final versions are distributed. The Environmental Work Group agreed to this revision.

After lunch, several additional minor changes to SP-F10 were projected on the screen, reviewed and approved by the Environmental Work Group.

SP-F2

Study Plan SP-F2 was available to the Environmental Work Group and is included in Attachment 4 to this summary. Bill Cox with CDFG explained that this study plan is a good first draft but needs some additional work. One participant raised a concern that this study plan appears to focus on the negative impacts instead of keeping an objective view throughout. The participants agreed that corrections would be made to the study plan to be sure objectivity is captured throughout.

Bill explained that the literature search tasks (Tasks 1 and 2) would allow a chance to find all applicable studies that will relate to this study area. He will provide some editorial comments to guide this study plan author along with some specifics on revisions or additional information needed that would make him comfortable sending the study plan to the Plenary Group. The participants agreed that Task 1 should begin as soon as possible.

DWR and the consulting team will revise SP-F2 and distribute revision for review at the next Environmental Work Group meeting. Steve Ford requested that additional suggested revisions be submitted by May 10th which will allow them time to distribute prior to the May 22nd Environmental Work Group meeting.

SP-F8

Study Plan SP-F8 was available to the Environmental Work Group and is included in Attachment 4 to this summary. Steve Ford went over concerns that were brought up by the Plenary Group meeting. Several changes were noted and will be sent to Phil Unger with the consulting team, for further editing. One participant suggested we reconsider this study plan given the proposed level of effort. Eric Theiss, NMFS explained that his agency would have no concern related to carcass nutrient loading upstream of Lake Oroville unless Special Status Species are allowed passage in the future. Considerable discussion took place during the morning meeting and was continued

during the lunch break between CDFG, NMFS, DWR and the consulting team. The recommendation from this lunchtime discussion was to dissolve Study Plan F8 and incorporate relevant tasks into other study plans in a qualitative evaluation to provide a basis for potential protection, mitigation and enhancement (PM&E) measures rather than the detailed evaluation currently described in F8. For example, F3.1 would provide data on spawning area and could also estimate carcass production. These carcass production estimates could then be provided to the appropriate terrestrial study plan leads for use in estimating possible impacts to upland species. Additionally, a water quality plan looking at nutrient loading can utilize carcass nutrient information as well. Modeling proposed in F8 would not be needed.

Eric Theiss requested that reasonable enhancement measures be considered for the inundation zone and not just the fluctuation zone. The inundation zone was described as all areas flooded by construction of Oroville Dam, while the fluctuation zone is identified as that land which is between the high and low water levels resulting primarily from Project operations. The group agreed that studies could look at a reasonable level of pre-project conditions such as how many fish were in the river before the project and what has been the impact from PG&E facilities' earlier upstream blockage of the Feather River vs. the Oroville Project facilities' impacts. Steve Ford suggested that such things would best be accomplished through the study plans being developed to assess cumulative effects or to evaluate the feasibility of protection, mitigation and enhancement measures.

The participants agreed to table Study Plan F8 and send a proposal to eliminate SP-F8 and incorporate the issue into other fishery study plans back to the Environmental Fisheries Task Force for consideration. Mike Meinz requested that DWR send a memo out identifying which sections of F8 will be incorporated in which study plans to the Environmental Work Group participants of the lunchtime discussion.

Cumulative Approach/ESA Task Force Update

The draft Approach for Cumulative Impact Analysis document was distributed to the Environmental Work Group and is provided as Attachment 5 to this summary. Steve Ford reminded the participants that their comments are needed as soon as possible. The next Cumulative Approach/ESA Task Force meeting is Monday, April 29th from 12:30-3:30pm at the Joint Operations Center, Sacramento. Anyone wanting to participate in the meeting was asked to contact Ted Alvarez at (916) 653-7375.

Next Steps

Schedule touch points

Steve Ford suggested that due to the lack of time left, we defer the discussion of study touch points to the next Environmental Work Group meeting. The participants agreed.

Task Force Schedule

F3.2, F9, and F1 will be distributed at the next Fisheries Task Force meeting on May 2, 2002 from 9:30 – 3:30 at the Oroville Field Division. F3.1, F4, F15, F5, and F21 will be discussed during the June 11, 2002 Fisheries Task Force meeting also from 9:30 – 3:30 at the Oroville Field Division.

Next Meeting

The next Environmental Work Group meeting will be:

Date: Wednesday, May 22, 2002
Time: 10:00am – 4:00pm
Location: Kelly Ridge Meeting Room

Action Items

The following list of action items identified by the Environmental Work Group includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and item status.

Carry Over Action Item:

Action Item #E47

Develop a report and data management protocol

Status:

DWR has developed a data management approach that was presented to the Plenary Group. The participants requested that the same presentation be given during the May Environmental Work Group meeting.